

Application No. 09/887,609
Amendment "D" dated October 12, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed July 27, 2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a computing system that includes a display screen that is capable of displaying a variety of types of media, a method for providing a dynamically controllable user interface that embraces the variety of types of media, the method comprising the acts of:

displaying a menu system on the display screen, wherein the menu system includes first and second categories selectable by a viewer, each of the first and second categories having corresponding subcategories;

displaying the first category at a selected location of the display screen;

in response to receiving a selection of the second category by the viewer, automatically replacing the first category with the second category at the selected position of the display screen, and such that each displayed category that is selected is ratcheted to the selected position; and

displaying, with the second category, the subcategories corresponding to the second category in a single horizontal line, such that all of the subcategories corresponding to the second category can be accessed by horizontal scrolling of the menu system and without requiring any vertical scrolling of the menu system, and wherein the only subcategories displayed on the display screen at a given instant in time are the one or more subcategories corresponding to a category displayed at the selected position on the display screen at the given instant in time, and such that every subcategory corresponding to each of the displayed categories, when displayed on the display screen, is displayed with the same horizontal alignment on the display screen, regardless of which category is selected.

2. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of displaying the first category is performed by a preset, default setting.

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3. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of displaying the first category is performed upon receipt of a first input command, wherein the first input command is received prior to the input command corresponding to the selection of the second category by the viewer.
4. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of displaying a menu system includes displaying the first and second categories in a hierarchical order.
5. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first category corresponds to a first type of media and the second category corresponds to a second type of media, and wherein the first type of media is different from the second type of media.
6. (Original) A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the first type of media includes television programming, and wherein the second type of media includes a web page.
7. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of displaying the first category includes displaying one or more subcategories corresponding to the first category.
8. (Cancelled).
9. (Original) A method as recited in claim 7, wherein the first category corresponds to a first type of media.
10. (Original) A method as recited in claim 9, wherein one of the one or more subcategories corresponding to the first category includes a selectable option that performs a function specific to the first type of media.
11. (Original) A method as recited in claim 9, wherein one of the one or more subcategories corresponding to the first category includes a selectable option that initiates an application corresponding to a third type of media.

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12. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising the act of displaying the first type of media in a background display of the display screen while the menu system is displayed in a foreground display of the display screen and the selected position remains constant, and such that the menu system overlays at least a portion of the first type of media being displayed in the background display.
13. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 7, wherein the act of automatically replacing includes replacing a display of the one or more subcategories corresponding to the first category with a display of one or more subcategories corresponding to the second category within the selected position.
14. (Original) A method as recited in claim 13, wherein the second category corresponds to a second type of media.
15. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14, wherein one of the one or more subcategories corresponding to the second category includes a selectable option that performs a function specific to the second type of media.
16. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14, wherein one of the one or more subcategories corresponding to the second category includes a selectable option that initiates an application corresponding to a third type of media.
17. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14, further comprising the act of displaying the second type of media in a background display of the display screen while the menu system is displayed in a foreground display of the display screen and the selected position remains constant.

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18. (Currently Amended) A dynamically controllable menu system for use with a display screen that provides options selectable by a user to perform one or more functions on a variety of different types of media, the menu system comprising:

a plurality of categories displayed on the display screen, wherein the categories are capable of ratcheting such that any category from the plurality of categories that is selected by a user is automatically displayed at a selected location on the display screen, in response to being selected, while having the selected position remain constant, and such that every displayed category that is selected is ratcheted to the selected position; and

a plurality of subcategories corresponding to the plurality of categories, wherein the only subcategories displayed on the display screen at a given instant in time are the one or more subcategories corresponding to the selected category displayed at the selected position on the display screen at the given instant in time, and wherein all of the one or more subcategories corresponding to the selected category are displayed within a single horizontal line, such that all of the subcategories corresponding to the selected category can be accessed by horizontal scrolling of the menu system and without requiring any vertical scrolling of the menu system, and such that every subcategory corresponding to each of the displayed categories, when displayed on the display screen, is displayed with the same horizontal alignment on the display screen, regardless of which category is selected.

19. (Original) A menu system as recited in claim 18, wherein the plurality of categories includes a first category specific to programming, a second category specific to the Internet, and a third category specific to electronic communication.

20. (Original) A menu system as recited in claim 19, wherein the subcategories corresponding to the first, second and third categories respectively allow a user to launch a function to modify a display of programming, modify a display of a web page, and participate in electronic communication.

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21. (Original) A menu system as recited in claim 20, wherein subcategories corresponding to the third category allows a user to participate in electronic communication while at least one of programming or a web page is displayed on the display screen.

22. (Original) A menu system as recited in claim 18, wherein at least one of the subcategories launches an application that provides current information on a selectable topic.

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23. (Currently Amended) A menu system for use in a computing system that includes a variety of options available to a user for controlling a variety of media, the menu system comprising:

a contextual option, which upon selection, controls an aspect of media displayed on a display device; and

a static option, which upon selection, executes a mini application while displaying the media on the display device, wherein the contextual option and the static option are organized in a categorical order that includes a plurality of categories, each of the categories having corresponding subcategories, wherein each of the displayed plurality of categories category that is selected by the user is automatically displayed at a selected position on the display screen, in response to being selected by a user, and such that a category that is not displayed at the selected position automatically replaces a category that is being displayed at the selected position in response to being selected,

wherein all subcategories corresponding to the selected category are displayed within a single horizontal line on the display screen, such that all of the subcategories corresponding to the selected category can be accessed by horizontal scrolling of the menu system and without requiring any vertical scrolling of the menu system, and wherein the only subcategories displayed on the display screen at a given instant in time are the one or more subcategories corresponding to a category displayed at the selected position on the display screen at the given instant in time, and such that every subcategory corresponding to each of the displayed categories, when displayed on the display screen, is displayed with the same horizontal alignment on the display screen, regardless of which category is selected.

24. (Original) A menu system as recited in claim 23, wherein subcategories correspond to the categories, and wherein the subcategories are selectable to a user to independently perform functions on a variety of different types of media.

25. (Original) A menu system as recited in claim 24, wherein the variety of different types of media includes programming, web pages, and electronic communication.

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26. (Original) A menu system as recited in claim 24, wherein the categories are displayed in a foreground display on a display screen and at least one type of the media is displayed in a background display of the display screen.

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27. (Previously Presented) A computer program product for implementing within a computing system a method for providing a ratcheting menu system on a display screen that interfaces between a user and a variety of media, the computer program product comprising:

a. computer readable medium for providing computer program code means comprising executable code for implementing the method recited in claim 1.

28. (Original) A computer program product as recited in claim 27, wherein the act of displaying the first category is performed by a preset, default setting.

29. (Original) A computer program product as recited in claim 27, wherein the act of displaying the first category is performed upon receipt of a first input command, wherein the first input command is received prior to the input command corresponding to the selection of the second category by the viewer.

30. (Previously Presented) A computer program product as recited in claim 27, further comprising executable code for implementing the act of displaying the menu system in a foreground display of the display screen while displaying a type of media in a background display of the display screen, and such that the menu system overlays at least a portion of the first type of media being displayed in the background display.

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31. (Original) A computer program product as recited in claim 27, wherein the first and second categories include selectable subcategories, wherein at least one of the selectable subcategories corresponds to launching an application independent of the type of media displayed in the background display of the display screen.

32. (Original) A computer program product as recited in claim 30, wherein the first category corresponds to a first type of media that is displayable on the display screen, and wherein the second category includes options that correspond to a second type of media that is displayable on the display screen.

33. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein upon replacing the first category with the second category the method further includes displaying the first category with the second category on the display.

34. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein every subcategory associated with the second category is displayed by the menu system within the display screen at the same time.

35. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the subcategories corresponding to the first category are different than the subcategories corresponding to the second category.

36. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 35, wherein none of the subcategories corresponding to the first category are the same as the subcategories corresponding to the second category.

37. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein horizontal scrolling includes moving the display of at least some subcategories horizontally on the display screen.

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38. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein every subcategory associated with the selected category is displayed by the menu system within the display screen at the same time.

39. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein the subcategories corresponding to the selected category are different than subcategories corresponding to another one of the plurality of the other categories.

40. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 39, wherein none of the subcategories corresponding to the selected category are the same as the subcategories corresponding to said another one of the other categories.

41. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein horizontal scrolling includes moving the display of at least some subcategories horizontally on the display screen.

42. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein one of the subcategories comprises a selectable program listing option that when selected, causes an electronic program guide listing to be displayed, the electronic program guide listing comprising a listing of programming by program channel and program time.

43. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 42, wherein the selectable program listing option, when selected, further causes the electronic program guide listing to be displayed at the same time that current programming is displayed and in a reduced size frame.

44. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 42, wherein the selectable program listing option, when selected, further causes the electronic program guide listing to be displayed with information corresponding to only a single channel and that overlaps currently displayed programming that is displayed in a background that fills a full screen.

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45. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein selection of one of the subcategories causes dimming of a currently displayed program that is displayed simultaneously with the menu system.

46. (New) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein selection of a subcategory corresponding to television programming causes the user interface to display a menu that only corresponds to a single channel and that includes a title of a currently aired program and a title of a program that is scheduled to be aired next on the single channel, and without displaying additional titles or information corresponding to other channels.